withholding consignments of exporters for more than 5-6 months on one plea or the other or on technical legal issue;

(b) whether it is also a fact that consignments of such exporters do not contain any other material than the declared goods;

(c) whether delay on the part of authorities could not be reduced despite plea of exporters causing losses of foreign exchange earnings by such exporters;

(d) whether any other step will now be taken for helping such exporters; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (e) Exports consignments are generally cleared for export at the Indira Gandhi International Airport Air-Cargo Complex in less than 48 hours. In few cases, however, verification of value or dascription, particularly where exports are made under the DEEC Scheme or under claim for higher drawback takes a longer time. It has been reported that against the average receipt of over 1000 export consignments per day, around 6 consignments, on an average, are detained in a month for detailed investigation. Many such cases apear to involve serious infraction of law.

Senior Officers in the Customs House continuously monitor the pendency of shipping bills and the pace of export clearance so as to ensure that clearance time does not exceed two days. The requirements of and procedure for testing the samples have also been relaxed. The Delhi Customs are also planning to bring the exports under the EDI System shortly, which will drastically curtail the time-frame for processing documents and clearance for exports. Instructions have also been issued that all officers and staff must assign top priority to export consignments and adopt a positive approach in dealing with exporters.

Imposition of Declining Rate of Income Tax

251. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any of the countries in the World are imposing declining rate of income tax to encourage declaration of higher income;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to introduce similar policy?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND THE MINISTER OF COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) to (c) The Central Board of Direct Taxes does not have any information of country or countries following a policy of declining rate of income-tax. There is no proposal to introduce a declining rate of income tax.

Uplinking of Satellite Television

252. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA:
SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY:
SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:
SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government have agreed to grant permission for "uplinking of facilities to foreign T.V. Networks" as reported in the Hindustan Times dated 21.6.96;

(b) if so, what are the details of discussion held by the Indian Prime Minister and Chairman of the News Corporation and his team of top STAR television executives besides other foreign delegation visiting India recently; and

(c) whether Government of India kept in mind the Supreme Court's judgement while granting such permission and also